

Science at Denali [not research and collecting in Denali]

Park managers have used science to make informed management decisions for as long as scientists have been gathering information about what's in the Denali landscape—its plants and animals, rocks and glaciers, peoples and history.

Even before the early naturalists and scientists began to study the world near Denali, native Athabascans were using traditional knowledge of ecosystems in their subsistence way of life. It was not just academic to know the habits of creatures, the weather patterns, and earth cycles—it meant survival.

At Denali National Park and Preserve, we encourage research, science, the process of putting knowledge to work protecting park resources and sustaining traditional ways of life, and sharing research results.



(a)



(b)

(a) 1961 Archaeological excavation (Photo credit: DENA Archives)

(b) 2002 Using GPS to Measure Movement Near the Denali Fault (Photo credit: Lucy Tyrrell)

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How Research Works at Denali



[can you reorient this photo?]

What kind of research goes on at Denali?

More than 680 scientific and scholarly studies have taken place in the park since the early 1900's. In 2002, there were approximately 100 studies that are recently completed or ongoing. These projects are either conducted by Denali staff (described in this document) and park cooperators (e.g., U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, and the Alaska State Department of Fish and Game), as well as by investigators from other agencies and institutions. Appropriate research gathers information while making minimal impacts to park resources. Researchers study everything imaginable from why glaciers surge, to the population dynamics of wolves and their prey, to the physiological effects of climbing Denali.

Anyone can access and read the Investigator Annual Reports for more recent projects conducted in Denali and all national parks by going to the website <http://science.nature.nps.gov/research>.

How do I apply to conduct a scientific study at Denali?

Any scientist wanting to conduct research must fill out an application and submit a study plan or proposal. To expedite this process, the National Park Service developed a Research Permit and Reporting System (RPRS). Beginning in 2001, scientists can file an application using the RPRS website (<http://science.nature.nps.gov/research>). Denali Park staff review the application and study plan for any administrative, scientific, or compliance concerns, assess how the proposed project fits in with the overall science goals of the park, and set the conditions of the research permit, if approved and issued.

What are the obligations of researchers?

Each researcher reports his/her results in an Investigator Annual Report (IAR). Beginning in 2002, each researcher at Denali will be expected to include an educational component to the project, in addition to filing an IAR.

How are records of research in the park kept?

Study files about each research project are kept in fireproof file cabinets in the resources building. Reports, dissertations, and publications resulting from scientific studies become part of Denali's Resources Technical Library. Arrangements can be made to use these materials by contacting the research administrator at (907) 683-6352. Computer databases are maintained about the research studies and the library volumes. Archived documents and collections are housed in the Denali National Park Museum or are loaned temporarily to other institutions.

Collecting and the Denali Museum



Is scientific collecting allowed in Denali?

Collecting permits may be granted for limited collecting of objects, whole organisms, or parts of organisms (e.g., leaves).

What happens to things that are collected at Denali for scientific study?

Some samples may be destroyed while being analyzed. Some animals may be collected and released after they have been measured or tagged. Specimens that are not destroyed remain the property of the National Park Service and are cataloged into Denali National Park and Preserve's museum collection.

Arrangements must be made in advance in order for specimens to leave the park and be stored elsewhere.

What is in the Denali Museum?

Denali National Park and Preserve's museum collection is an assemblage of objects, works of art, historic documents, and natural history specimens documenting the human and natural history of Denali. It presently includes over 44,000 objects and 50 linear feet of archives. It includes archeological objects systematically recovered from within the park's boundaries as well as the field records for them; biological voucher specimens that document natural resource management research conducted within the park and associated field records; early climbing gear; mining tools and equipment related to the Kantishna mining district among others.

Can researchers use the museum?

Due to a lack of suitable display space, much of the collection is maintained in a storage facility in the Headquarters area and is not on public display. Part of the collection and curation functions are in a newly remodeled facility where there is space to accommodate researchers when using the collection. Access to the collection for research is by appointment only, (907) 683-9536.